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1881

THE
MERRY
MONTHS
ALL

JANUARY

THE MERRY MONTHS ALL

POEMS BY

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JANUARY.

O THE beginnings of things!
Bright little springs in the mountains,
  From which great rivers down flow;
The first pale pink of the roses;
  The first white fall of the snow;
Babies, the beautiful darlings,
  Dimpled and winsome and dear;
The glow of the sky in the morning —
  And the first new days of the year!

I love the beginnings of things!
For then you feel stronger and braver;
  More ready to climb and to try;
The old day of blunders is over,
  The time for mistakes is gone by,
And somehow or other the future
  Is fuller of light and of cheer,
When a little maid peeps at the world
  Through the first new days of the year!

FEBRUARY.

Snow, snow, above and below;
  Holidays over and gone;
Frost-bitten trees; frost-bitten breeze,
  Dragging the winter on;
School every day; not too much play;
  Most of your Christmas things broke;
Sometimes a thaw, with everything raw,
  And slush on your trousers or cloak;
The days of betwixt-and-between times
  Are not quite so much of a joke.

Hold! Hold! Thawing or cold,
  Why need I get in a fret?
Plenty of fun, plenty of sun
  Is left in the wide world yet;
Hare-and-hound running, hop-scotch and gunning,
  Lacrosse and marbles and ball,
Skating and sliding, seeking and hiding.
  Come with a whoop and a call!
The days of betwixt-and-between times
  Are not quite so bad after all!

FEBRVARY

MARCH.

O the breezy March days!
O the gay and arch days!
When deep in sheltered valleys
A thought of spring-time rallies
To wake the frozen music
That winter left behind;
And up the hills advancing
The soft gray clouds come dancing,
To the bonny lilting measure
Of the whistling o' the wind!

O the breezy March time!
O the gay and arch time!
When brave and bright and nipping,
The longer days come tripping,
And nature, sharp but cheery,
Calls out in accents kind;
For who would mind her bluster,
Amid the joys that cluster
When we hear the summer answer
To the whistling o' the wind.

MARCA

APRIL.

Tears in a maiden's eyes!
  Little enough they deceive us;
  Little enough do they grieve us;
Well do we know that beneath them
The joy of young life smiles and glows;
  Soon into dimples and gladness
  Will break the thin mist of her sadness,
As out of the showers of April
Springs upward the bloom of the rose!

Rain in the April skies!
  What do we care for its falling?
  Thousand faint voices low-calling
Tell that behind it the sunshine
Waits, in a passion of light,
  To set the glad wild bird a-singing,
  To set the wild flower-bells ringing,
To make the red rose of the morning
Burst out of the gloom of the night.

APRIL

MAY.

Not the word, but the soul of the thing!
Not the name, but the spirit of spring!
And so, at morning early,
Through hedge-rows fresh and pearly,
  Bedecked with hawthorn branches
  And apple blossoms gay,
Her golden hair around her,
As if some god had crowned her,
  Across the dewy woodland
  Comes dancing in the May.

O spirit of hope and of truth!
O spirit of beauty and youth!
Thine still the olden glory;
Thine still the song and story
  Of joyous lads and lasses,
  Of birds upon the spray,
Of perfumed airs a-blowing,
Of green things glad with growing,
  Of all the world grown young again
  To welcome in the May.

MAY

JUNE.

March is a trumpet flower,
And April a crocus wild,
May is a harebell slender
With the clear blue eyes of a child,
July is the cup of a tulip
Where gold and crimson meet,
And August a tiger lily,
Tawny with passion and heat,
— But thou art the rose of the world,
Precious and glowing and sweet!

Fair is the flush of the dawning
Over the face of the sky,
Sweet is the tangle of music
From wild birds fluttering by,
Brilliant the glow of the sunset,
And graceful the bound of the deer,
Glad is the laugh of the children
Ringing like joy-bells clear,
— But what can compare with *thy* beauty,
O red, red rose of the year!

JUNE

JULY.

A RED sun rising at morning
With flame on his burning crest:
A red sun sinking at evening,
In the molten glow of the west;
The air grown languid and drooping,
On wings too heavy to fly;
The voice of a drowsy locust
That croons to a drowsy sky;
And cool waves crisping and darkling,
Across the hot sands of July!

Down on the beach with the seashells,
Their brave brown cheeks aglow,
I watch the play of the children,
And follow them to and fro.
O sweet red lips of my darlings!
O light of the fearless eye!
With ye comes rest for the spirit;
And freshness and peace draw nigh
Like cool waves crisping and darkling,
Across the hot sands of July!

JULY.

AUGUST.

The world is all so busy,
The world is all so gay,
There's such a glare of yellow light
Along the dusty street,
I'd rather leave it far behind
And steal awhile away
To where the beechen shadows
Kiss the cool grass at their feet,
— And there to lie a-dreaming.

Far off I hear the tumult
Of music and of mirth;
Far off I hear the clamor
Of the laughing girls and boys;
But the trees are whisp'ring secrets
To the listening ear of earth,
And life is much too sweet
To-day for hurry or for noise,
— I'd rather lie a-dreaming.

AOVT

SEPTEMBER.

Ripe, ripe, and mellow!
Apples red and yellow,
Peaches in the orchard,
  Grapes upon the wall,
Berries in the hedges,
Nuts upon the ledges,
Dusky bloom of purple plum
  And nectarine that fall
Ripe, ripe, and mellow!

Wet days and sunny,
Nature-gathered honey,
Fragrant wealth of fruit and wine
  To gladden all the earth;
Now that summer's going,
What have I for showing—
What from all the happy days
  To make the winter's mirth
Ripe, ripe, and mellow?

SEPTEMBER.

OCTOBER.

The golden woods shine like a glory;
The air is as balm;
The land is as fair as a story;
The waves sing a psalm;
Like censers of incense the pungent
Swift odors ascend;
And far in the distant horizon
Where sea and sky blend;
We know not where Heaven beginneth
Or where Earth may end.

Dear Heart! read the joy and the sweetness;
Endeavor to see
The lesson in all its completeness
That God giveth thee:
So full of the light of the spirit
The body should glow
When nearing its time of departure,
That we could not know
Which steps crossed the threshold of Heaven
And left us below!

·OCTOBER·

NOVEMBER.

O how withered and dead
  The face of the bare earth lies
Under the leafless trees
  And the frown of the drooping skies!
O how silent and sad
  She sleeps in her gloomy rest,
With never the song of a bird
  And never a flower on her breast,
— And yet from the gloom and the silence
  The far-off spring shall arise!

Nay! in the hidden life
  Of the pretty things sleeping below,
Waiting the moment of waking,
  Ready to bourgeon and grow,
Who shall say but the touch
  Of this cool dark quiet to-day,
  Is full of as saving grace
As the strong warm kisses of May;
— And which is the dearest and kindest,
  No soul upon earth may know!

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER.

Some fellows go blowing for Springtime,
And some will hurrah for the Fall;
Some think that there's nothing like marbles,
And some that there's nothing like ball;
But if you want regular rackets
With more fun than ever was guessed,
With coasting and skating and sliding,
And everything just at its best—
The jolly old month of December
Is worth any two of the rest.

For then there is ice on the river,
And then there is snow on the hill,
And the days are so short and so shining,
And the nights are so white and so still;
And then at the end there is Christmas,
Of which I have no cause for complaint,
When your stockings get filled by your mother
Or some other sort of a saint;
Now, if there's anything better,
I'd just like to know — but there ain't!

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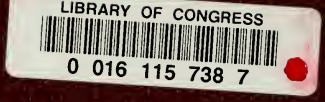
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